RACC Meeting Minutes No. 146   (4/6/05)

1. <u>Purpose:</u> A regularly scheduled meeting of the RACC was held from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. EST in Room 3246 on Wednesday, April 6, 2005, to discuss and address national and regional AWIPS issues, problems and concerns.

2. <u>Regions In Attendance:</u> The following regions (and other NWS organizations) participated in the conference call: **ERH**: Neal DiPasquale; **SRH**: Eric Howieson; **WRH**: Dwight Williams, Sean Wink; **CRH**: Bill Gery, Greg Noonan; **ARH**: Phil Mieczynski; **PRH**: Bill Ward; **NGIT**: Bruno Vercillo; **FSL**: Rich Jesuroga, Jim Ramer, Carl Bullock; **Warning Decision Training Branch**: Tim Decker;

3. <u>Discussion Items:</u> The following topics were discussed/briefed at the meeting:

a. <u>Status of OB4.2 and OB5.0</u>: Six sites are at OB4, two sites are at OB4.1, 117 sites are at OB4.1a, and 21 sites are at OB4.2. There are 18 sites on OB5 beta 6 (7 WFOs, 1 RFC, and 10 others). Two headquarters sites are beta testing OB4.1b. This emergency release is designed for sites that will not be able to install OB4.2 before the severe weather season begins at the site. There are several critical WarnGen DRs (fixed in OB4.2 and OB5) that are addressed in OB4.1b.

The installation team plans on having OB5 installed at ILM next week. They plan on installing OB5 at the last WFO the week of April 18. If all goes well, national implementation is tentatively scheduled for early May although this could slip a bit. OB5.1 will be a Red Hat Enterprise 3.0 upgrade and no patches are planned for the government software. OB5.2 will be strictly a Linux upgrade and containing any patches that come after 5.0 is deployed.

b. <u>Replacement of Printers at AWIPS Sites</u>: The printers at all sites are old, need a lot of maintenance, their performance is reduced, and there are a limited amount of parts available. The AWIPS Printer Replacement Project (APRP) will have 3 phases. The first phase will be gathering requirements by using a questionaire and polling regional and individual sites. This phase will take about 3-5 weeks. The second phase will identify the replacement printers, finalize a test plan, perform a test, finalize a mod note and then present the plan to the program office. This second phase will take about 6-8 weeks. The third phase will initiate procurement of the replacement printers, provide an integrated maintenance support plan, and perform the replacement process.

The entire project will take about 13 weeks and sites could begin to see replacement printers in early July. This presentation by Franz Zichy to the RACC is a heads up for the regional focal points. Franz will send them an e-mail detailing the above information.

c. <u>AWIPS/CRS Interface Issues</u>: The transferNWR script in AWIPS uses ftp to transfer messages from AWIPS to CRS. It was modified in OB4 to replace ftp with sftp to be compliant with the DOC security policy. However, because of DS performance issues, this had to be pulled out of OB4. It needs to be rescheduled in a later build. Meanwhile, CRS has implemented

automated password aging. If offices fail to change their crs user password before it expires, the ftp of messages from AWIPS to CRS fails. This problem also is eliminated when transferNWR transitions from ftp to sftp. The consensus of the group was to suggest to the CRS folks to ask the CIO office for a waiver on the DOC security policy. Another idea was the sites can be reminded to change their passwords (before they expire) by using a quarterly PM task using the EMRS main calendar. But some drawbacks were noted on this idea.

d. <u>Update on the DS Performance Issues</u>: Mike Moss of the SST distributed to the regional focal points a Word document that outlines some thoughts on how to improve the DS performance. This outline basically consists of two parts: First, those actions that should help improve the performance and second, those actions that don't necessarily improve performance but may help in times when the system is bogged down. The outline mentions a few attachments that elaborate on how to implement the suggested changes. The attachments were not included in the distribution to the focal points as they are being "polished up" and will be included as part of the package within the next week.

It was also noted that sites have been having both VTEC related (i.e., the duplicate ETN problem) and performance problems during severe weather operations. Eric Howieson brought up that WFO Jackson, MS (JAN) was having problems earlier in the day. They had instances in which their D2D using WarnGen was frozen for up to 5 minutes. As you know, VTEC and the follow-up requirements have resulted in both WarnGen and the Text Workstation to become increasingly dependent on heavy access to the Informix Text Database. There was a suggestion/discussion of turning off VTEC at JAN and seeing if their performance would improve, since they would be getting more severe weather this afternoon. Ashley Kells informed them that there was no one at the RACC who could make that decision and that this type of decision would have to be brought to our customer/partners before turning off VTEC. Central Region Headquarters (BCQ) is going to attempt to stress their system with both VTEC on and off to see the differences in performance.

[Editor=s Note: After this RACC, Deirdre Jones of the SEC decided to form a Tiger Team to aggressively tackle and resolve this problem of workstation performance slowdowns.]

e. <u>Focal Point/Participants Reports, Problems and Concerns</u>:

 <u>Alaska Region</u>: nothing significant to report.

 <u>Central Region</u>: nothing significant to report.

 <u>Eastern Region</u>: nothing significant to report.

 <u>Pacific Region</u>: nothing significant to report.

 <u>Southern Region</u>: We have noted that the FireFox web browser is unable to access the various WSH web sites that contain the mod notes, lessons learned, etc. A pop up message says that one must use MicroSoft=s Internet Explorer to access these sites. It was noted that most of our sites do not have MicroSoft=s IE on their machines since there are security risks associated with it.

The group suggested that these complaints be forwarded to Al Wissman of the Engineering Division here at WSH.

 Western Region: nothing significant to report.

 FSL: We are looking at the performance problems (i.e., lockup of the D2D) and the problem with the duplicating of the ETNs. We would like to work with a focal point person at those southern region sites that are expecting severe weather in the next day or two. This discussion with the southern region would be taken off line later.

 Training Branch: We are discovering that in the process of setting up our training here, that OB4.2 is very similar to OB5. We are also reacting to the new software that went into OB4.2 after we set up its training.

 NGIT: nothing significant to report.

The next RACC is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20, 2005. If you know of any agenda items you wish to be discussed at this RACC, please e-mail them to Jim Stenpeck and cc Wayne Martin. This is to ensure that all of the appropriate WSH personnel attend this RACC to address your issues.